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ABSTRACT

Interim results of a longitudinal study of the effects of socioeconomic segregation in six Swedish urban municipalities are reported in this document. The empirical work discussed includes interviews with school staffs and the collection of public data concerning schools and pupils in the Swedish cities. The studies focus on the student population that began school in 1972. The researchers have thus far calculated the social composition of school classes, published a report describing the structure and background of social class segregation, and studied and reported on the effects of segregation on school children. New data based on interviews with pupil welfare staffs, academic achievement, remedial teaching, immigrant education, and courses available to upper elementary school students are discussed. The progress of transfer and migration studies is also presented to further ascertain segregation effects. (Author/MK)

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A short description of the project

Research into school segregation in Sweden was started at the end of the 1960s by Harald Swedner. In the United States Harald Swedner had come into contact with discussions and research concerning racially segregated schools. In that connection he was interested in the question as to whether segregation also existed in Swedish comprehensive elementary schools. Pilot investigations conducted in Malmö revealed that the social and ethnic structure of the pupil population varied from one school to another, mainly because the catchment areas of the various schools comprised socially homogeneneous housing areas.

The 1969 Elemantary School Curriculum stated that classes should be as comprehensively recruited as possible. In practice, this novel principle was subordinated to other established principles of class composition, namely that pupils should have the shortest and safest possible route between home and school, that children from the same neighbourhood should be put in the same class, and that classes should be kept as intact as possible all the way through elementary school.

Owing to the increasing residential segregation that followed in the wake of the housing boom of the 1960s and early 1970s, the implementation of these principles resulted in a steadily more pronounced division into socially distinct school areas. Social problems arising among the population of low status segregated housing areas were reflected in schools. Surveys of socially differentiated classes and schools had failed, however, to give any clear indication as to the effects of social structure on such matters as the pupils' cognitive standards, school problems and contacts with classmates.

The research project "Social segregation in comprehensive schools in Sweden" commenced in 1972 with the aim of charting the structure and scope of segregation in schools and studying its genesis, and also of investigating the consequences of social segregation to the pupils. The project was also given the ultimate aim of devising means of counteracting this segregation and its effects, insofar as the latter had proved to be disadvantageous to the pupils.

The empirical work done so far has mainly comprised interviews of school staff and the collection of public data of various kinds concerning schools and pupils in six major municipalities in Sweden. The principal framework of the study is a longitudinal study of the pupil generation wich started school in 1972. These pupils reached the senior level of elementary school in the autumn term 1978. The population numbers about 4 500 pupils.

The pupils have been divided into social classes according to parental (mostly paternal) occupations, and on the basis of this social determination we have calculated the social composition of the various school classes as well as the social structure of schools and school management areas. The social classification is based on that previously made by Harald Swedner and Göran Gustavsson [1]. One reason for basing the social classification of parental occupations was the relative simplicity of such a procedure when dealing with a pupil population as large as ours. The occupations of parents and guardians are stated on the pupils' record cards. Especially in a large population, occupations usually provide a more accurate indication of material and other living conditions than income or education, partly because of the difficulty involved in comparing the available incomes and educational status of different categories.

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1) Gustavsson, G and Swedner, H: "Theatre-going habits and attitudes in Malmö in the spring of 1962". Lund 1974

During an initial phase of the project work, socio-economic data were collected concerning municipalities, school management areas and schools, and historical studies were made of the school system and the development of the municipalities. This material was published in the report "Social segregation in comprehensive schools in Sweden. Descriptive section. Preliminary version" (Lund 1975), which represents an attempt to describe the structure and background of segregation.

A second phase of the project work was devoted to studies of the effects of segregation on the children. Some of the findings have been published in the report entitled "Segregation and special treatment in comprehensive schools" (Lund 1977). These findings are based on interviews of grade 3 class teachers concerning the children in their classes, and also on records concerning the pupils' school performance, remedial teaching and immigrant instruction. Pupil welfare staff in the schools concerned were also interviewed, and the findings obtained in these interviews - conducted in grade 5 - will be presented. Headmasters and directors of studies were also interviewed in some of the municipalities involved in the project (Malmö, Linköping and Borås), and the results of these interviews have been published in three interim reports.

During the school year 1977/78, data concerning school performance, remedial teaching and immigrant instruction and choices of courses and subjects for grade 7 were collected to facilitate comparisons between junior and intermediate level with reference to "our" generation of pupils. These data will also make it possible to undertake special studies concerning pupils who in the course of their school careers migrate between school management areas with different social structures.

Parallel to the other work which has taken place during the project, data have been collected concerning changes in the composition of

the classes, i.e. pupils who have left classes or joined them, pupils transferred to parallel classes or remedial classes, and pupils repeating a grade. One of the purposes of these transfer and migration studies is to ascertain whether segregation patterns are changed as a result of such movements and what effects transfers and migrations have on pupils and classes in different school environments.

Social segregation

For the purposes of our study, social segregation is defined as "spatial separation of social groups". In order for social segregation to occur in a society, there must be population groups with different social conditions. Segregation in turn can lead to a reinforcement of these differences, due for example to certain groups not having the same access as others to resources of various kinds, e.g. material resources, contacts, knowledge or influence.

The justification for our study of segregation is that it can provide knowledge of effects of this kind and that it is possible to identify the general differences existing between social groups in segregated environments. It may be difficult in this connection to distinguish segregation effects from the effects of more "original" social differences. In our opinion, however, distinctions of this kind are not the prime concern. Instead our aim should be to arrive at the completest possible description and analysis of differences in the situation of people in different social environments, whether those differences be attributable to spatial separation or to the different treatment given to social groups in a broader sense.

Both segregation and other forms of special treatment of social groups can be brought about by public authorities, enterprise and other exponents of political and economic power, but they can also be brought about by the individuals themselves. As regards the gen-

esis of social segregation in the education system, four main types of procedure can be distinguished. (1) Legal, administrative procedures (certain schools or training routes, for example, are closed to certain social strata). (2) Economic procedures (fees or suchlike excluding certain strata). (3) Qualification procedures (the requirement of formal qualifications or suchlike not usually possessed by certain social strata). (4) Rules of recruitment based on some other segregation (e.g. housing areas, pre-school amentities). Then there is the tendency for people to opt "of their own free will" for certain schools, areas etc in keeping with the habits, traditions and attitudes conferred by their previous experience. The segregated sturcture existing in Swedish elementary schools is partly a result of the fourth type of procedure mentioned here - recruitment in different schools being influenced by existing residential segreation - and it is also a result of the pupils' ability to qualify (type 3) through their school performance. The latter applies to internal segregation, the division of pupils, for example, into option groups, clinical groups, remedial classes and streams.

Theoretically speaking, we can also distinguish various types of effects resulting from segregation. (1) Segregation makes the segregated groups ignorant or uncertain of the conditions of other groups and therefore leaves them with inadequate knowledge of society. (2) Segregation reinforces experiences of belonging to subordinate or superior groups. This can lead to a sense of belonging to ones own group, but it can also produce isolation and apathy. (3) Segregation can result in certain groups having less access to resources and (4) less chance of influencing their own situation. These various types of effect stem from segregation itself and also from the special treatment wich may be directly bound up with segregation. All of these effects may conceivably occur in elementary school classes and groups with socially homogeneous pupil structures. Pupils are denied knowledge of the life of children from other social strata,

they may feel inferior or superior (in streams or clinical groups, for example), they can be allotted different resources (different types of teacher recruitment, remedial instruction etc), they may acquire unequal opportunities of influencing their own situation (through their knowledge, training and education etc). The results of the segregation studies have not been arranged according to this scheme of things, however, partly because the effects of segregation are not easily distinguished from the effects of the treatment accorded by schools and society in other respects to children from different social strata. Segregation cannot be viewed in isolation from other factors determining the conditions of these strata. Instead it should be seen as part of the function of school vis à vis pupils from different social strata.

The fields of investigation

In selecting fields of investigation for our studies of segregation in Swedish comprehensive elementary schools, we tried to find municipalities where socio-economic segregation was so pronounced that its effects could be studied in the school environment. We were therefore referred to the largest and most urbanized municipalities. Segregation in smaller communities is often less clearly reflected in schools, because usually such communities comprise only one or a small number of catchment areas.

Our investigations are being conducted in six municipalities: Stockholm, Botkyrka, Lidingö, Malmö, Linköping and Borås. Various forms of segregation are represented in these municipalities. Greater Stockholm, the most urbanized region anywhere in Sweden, has an exceptionally large scale of residential segregation at "municipal level". Botkyrka and Lidingö represent the extremes of the socio-economic compartmentalization of Greater Stockholm, the traditional pattern being for the northern part of this region to confer high status while the southern part does the opposite. Parts of Botkyrka

have been rapidly built up and their population has risen steeply. Our inquiries in Botkyrka have focussed primarily on these parts. Lidingö, on the other hand, is a municipality with a stagnant population and with a relatively small volume of housing production, especially where multi-family dwellings are concerned. In the Municipality of Stockholm, the areas which we have selected for closer study represent different stages in the urbanization process. The school management areas studied comprise old established settlements of various kinds.

Malmö is also a metropolitan environment with a traditional pattern of socially conditioned residence (low status in the east and high status in the west) which has been reinforced and partly transformed by the addition of new outlying areas. The new high-rise areas of Rosengård, Kroksbäck and Lindängen contrast, for instance, with earlier tenement and detached housing development in the west, overlooking the Sound. In addition, there is extensive differentiation into socially distinct residential environments, both in the central areas of the city and in the outlying areas.

Linköping and Borås are direct opposites in many ways. They were selected for this inquiry mainly because of the great difference between their relative immigrant populations, about 9.5 per cent of the residents of Borås being immigrants and against 1.8 in Linköping. Borås has a high female employment participation rate and low-paid industrial occupations predominate there. Linköping, by contrast, is dominated by schools, administration and advanced engineering. As can be seen from table 1, there are many pronounced differences between the municipalities included in our study.

Findings presented in the report "Segregation and special treatment in comprehensive elementary schools"

In presenting the results of our inquiries in the report "Segregation and special treatment in comprehensive elementary schools",

Table 1. Comparative socio-economic data from the municipalities included in the project

Population 1974-01-01	Stockholm 681 318	Botkyrka 63 099	Lidingö 35 399	Malmö 251 431	Linköping 107 033	Borås 106 287
Percentages of grade 1 pupils coming from various social classes, school year 1972/73						
I	17.7	6.5	37.1	11.0	12.5	7.0
IIA	14.1	17.2	18.1	11.4	17.2	9.1
IIB	28.1	24.3	17.4	26.5	25.8	21.9
III	30.6	36.5	18.8	45.1	41.9	56.1
Non-codifiable	9.5	13.4	8.6	6.0	2.6	6.0
Recipients of public assistance as a percentage of the mean population in 1975	6.7	14.5	3.4	8.4	5.3	3.0
Public assistance in Skr per case in 1975	3 196	4 111	2 452	3 148	2 993	2 228
No. Gainfully employed women as a percentage of population in 1970 (35 hrs per wk)	36.2	39.9	33.4	33.6	28.0	39.1
Percentage of gainfully employed persons aged 16-19 in 1970 (20 hrs per wk)	34.1	40.8	26.1	41.6	38.7	47.6
Percentage employed in manufacturing industry in 1970	18.7	29.4	18.9	28.6	33.5	44.6

cont.

Table 1 (cont)

Population 1974-01-01	Stockholm 681 318	Botkyrka 63 099	Lidingö 35 399	Malmö 251 431	Linköping 107 033	Borås 106 287
Administration, services etc. in 1970	43.1	28.3	35.0	31.6	34.6	28.9
Median incomes in 1973	26 700	28 400	30 800	23 900	24 100	22 100
men	34 400	36 500	43 000	32 600	33 100	28 300
women	20 600	19 200	21 200	17 100	15 500	16 500
Percentage non-Swedish residents in 1973	6.7	15.1	6.3	7.9	1.8	9.5
No. votes cast for Soc. Dem. And Left Communist parties in 1976 local elections	48.2	52.5	25.7	51.3	48.0	47.3
No. Cons., Centre and Lib. seats on municipal council in 1976	49.6	45.7	58.6	46.9	48.0	50.9
No. Soc. Dem. and Left Communist seats on municipal council in 1977	49	33	13	32	37	38
No. Cons., Centre and Lib. seats on municipal council in 1977	52	28	29+	29	39+	41
			Environmental Party 7		Christian Democratic Party 3	

we have chosen to confine ourselves to the total findings obtained for all fields of investigation, divided between various types of social structure existing in school classes. Thus we have not classified our material by schools or school management areas, nor by municipalities. If we were to mention school management areas or municipalities by name, this might cause labels to be put on them, in which case their reputation and the self-respect of their residents might be prejudiced and inequalities between different areas might be reinforced, added to which the differences between schools, school management areas and municipalities would perhaps be highlighted at the expense of our discussion of the general workings of the school system. Thus our main purpose is to point to general traits and to the workings of socially different school environments.

In presenting the findings from the interview survey of teachers in grade 3 in the school year 1974/75, we have chosen to group the class units according to their social composition. Classes in which children from social classes I and II make up more than 75 per cent of the total number of pupils have been designated high status classes. Classes where between 50 and 75 per cent of the pupils come from these upper reaches of society we have termed higher mean status classes. A third category comprises classes where between 25 and 50 per cent of the pupils come from social classes I and II and where social class III thus predominates together with children of indeterminate social status. Classes of this kind we have termed lower mean status classes. Finally we have designated as low status classes those school classes where less than 25 per cent of the pupils belong to the top social classes and where, accordingly, children of social class III parents or children of parents without occupational designations overwhelmingly predominate. Pupils of indeterminate social status vary in number from one type of class to another and are most numerous in low status classes. Many of the parents of these children are immigrants, and many are single mothers.

Our definition of segregation as "spatial separation of social groups" presupposes the existence in a society of population groups with differing social conditions. Segregation in turn can lead to the reinforcement of these inter-group differences, due, for example, to certain people not gaining the same access as others to resources of various kinds, e.g material resources, contacts, knowledge or power. The justification for a study of segregation is that we wish to find out about effects of this kind and also that the segregated structure per se can shed light on general differences between social groups. General differences are less manifest in an integrated social structure where people from different social groups are mingled together.

In studying the effects of segregated school environments on pupils, it is hard to distinguish between the effects of segregation and the effects of differences. The important thing, however, is not to attempt delimiations this kind but to try to see what kind of reality the various environments present the pupils with in total terms. To this end, there are other parts of the children's world which also have to be studied: the housing area, play and leisure areas, day nurseries and leisure centres. Thus our initial premise is that segregation should not be viewed in isolation from other factors determined the conditions in a human situation. Schools, like other social institutions, function differently in relation to different social groups. This can imply deliberate or unconscious separate treatment of pupils, and sometimes this special treatment takes the form of segregation, as for example when social class III children are put in different school classes from children belonging to higher social strata, when lower performers are separated from high performers, and when problem pupils are put onto clinical instruction. In other cases special treatment implies that educational methods correspond better to the aptitudes of certain social groups of pupils than to the aptitudes of others, that teachers have different degrees of understanding for children from different strata,

that different parental groups have different attitudes to school. It can also mean that economic resources are unequally divided between groups - economic resources being both the resources controlled by schools and the resources present in the children's domestic environments.

Many of these factors are to be found in both segregated and integrated school environments. They are built into the general modus operandi of the school system, which in turn is influenced by the structure of the community as a whole.

Among other things, schools have to grade individuals for different positions in the production system and the life of the community. Nowadays it is educational merits that justify the tenure of individual positions with their varying concomitant material living standards and social status. The system of competition governing selection for these positions already exists in elementary school. Another task of the school system is to communicate to the rising generation the values, norms and knowledge wich are accepted in society and which constitute the ideological framework of the economic system. The competitive system and the ideological function leave their mark on school activities and help to consolidate the differences existing between pupils from different social strata.

The distribution of the pupil population between different types of class

Figure 1 shows that the lower mean status and low status classes constitute just over half of all the 210 classes included in the survey. Classes with heavy social bias, i.e. high status and low status classes, together make up one-third of the material. As can be seen, social class I children in high status school classes make up almost half the pupil population, while social class III children are very few in number. The distribution between different types of

class implies that the great majority of the social class III children are in school classes (lower mean status and low status classes) to which most of the social class I children do not belong. Thus the majorities of these two strata do not meet each other in the teaching situation.

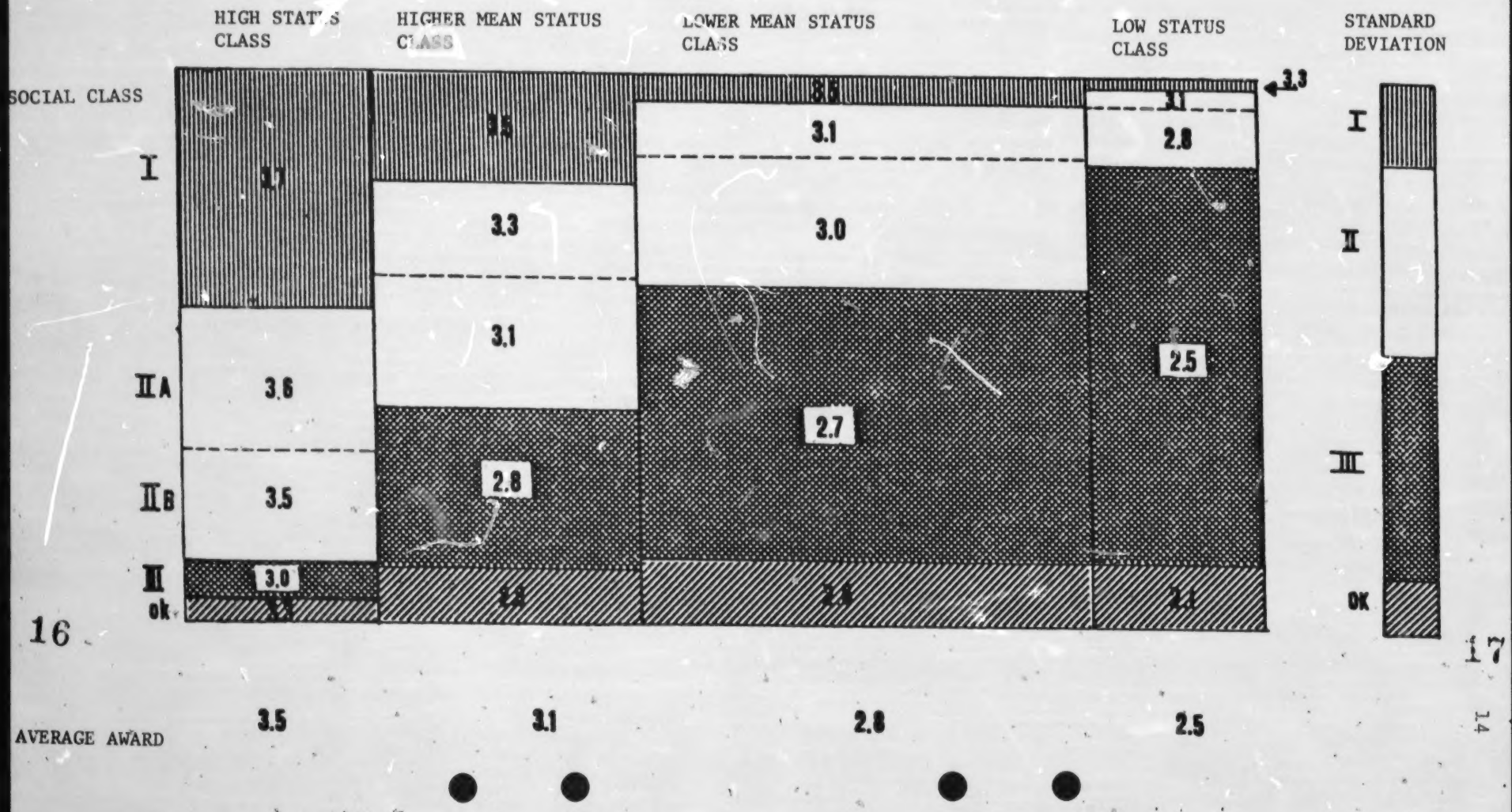
A division has also been made into classes with high and low pupil turnover rates respectively. A high pupil turnover rate in a class means that seven pupils left it during the junior level grades, while a low turnover rate implies that less than seven pupils left the class during that period. The lower the status category a class belongs to, the higher its pupil turnover rate tends to be. Only a very small proportion of the high status classes have had high pupil turnover rates, as against more than half the low status classes.

Performance and performance groups in different school environments

Pupil performance has been measured with the aid of standardized achievement tests and marks for Swedish and mathematics in grade 3. The standardized achievement test is constructed by the NBE, while marks represent the teachers' assessments of the pupils' overall performance. Figure 1 shows mean scores in the Swedish standardized achievement tests. In this figure, the pupils have been divided according to social class and according to the social composition of their respective school classes.

In high status classes, social class I pupils obtain the highest average score in the standardized achievement tests: 3.7 for Swedish. The small group of social class III pupils in this type of class averaged 3.0. As can be seen, social class I pupils in all types of school classes obtained better results than the social class III children. But the greater the predominance of social class I in a particular type of school class, the better are the results obtained

Figure 1. Standardized achievement test in Swedish, grade 3, school year 1974/75: test results of various social classes, by type of school class.



by all children irrespective of social status. The standardized achievement tests in mathematics reveal a similar tendency. Marks for Swedish and mathematics also reveal the same pattern; invariably, the greater the predominance of social class I in a school class, the better the marks awarded. We believe that these relationships are essentially due to the different conditions affecting both schools and their pupils in the different school environments. A pupil coming from social class I generally meets a different situation in a high status class compared with a low status class: a different home background, a different residential environment and so on. A social class I pupil living in a low status area will in certain respects have more in common with social class III children than with social class I children living in a high status area. The differences of achievement level existing between different types of class may also be partly due to what are known as contextual factors such as the impact of the generally lower achievement level of social group III pupils on the achievement levels of the other pupils, or to variations from one school environment to another as regards school staff, work procedures, resources and so forth.

In classes where the general level of school performance is low, teachers tend to give their pupils higher awards than are indicated by the standardized achievement tests, especially the poorest achievers. In cases of this kind, pupils from superior social classes tend to obtain "augmented" marks more often than pupils from lower social classes who obtained the same score in the standardized achievement tests. This can be seen as an example of pupils from lower social classes being regarded as inferior to other pupils in the classroom situation.

Streaming implies the division of the class into groups according to achievement level, working pace etc. In the grade which we investigated, teachers can divide the class for two "halv-class periods" in Swedish and mathematics. By measuring differences in the average achievement levels of the various groups, we found that pupils had

been grouped according to achievement level in about one-third of all the classes investigated. Streaming is most common in classes dominated by social class III pupils, possibly because these classes are more heterogeneous in terms of performance. Usually almost half the pupils are low performers (scoring ones or twos in standardized achievement tests), while the remainder are normal or above-normal performers. By contrast, classes where higher social classes predominate have only a small number of low performers and appear to be more homogeneous teaching groups. But there are other factors, such as local regulations and guidelines, which can also influence group formations. The social class III pupils, being the weakest performers totally speaking, predominate in the "worst" of the streams. This is logical enough, but at the same time social class II pupils tend to be put in a "worse" group and pupils from higher social classes in a "better" group even if they are level in terms of achievement. This resembles the tendency whereby pupils from a low social class are "underrated" compared with pupils from a higher social class in the award of marks. A comparison of standardized achievement test results and marks within the streamed groups also shows that, where marks are concerned, it is an advantage to be put in a "better" group. Pupils in the low group do not obtain such high marks in relation to their standardized achievement test results as the pupils in the high group. Furthermore, they have more problems with classmates etc that do the pupils in the high group, which can be interpreted both as an effect of streaming and also as a reason for these particular pupils being put in a low group. Streaming shows how pupils who are regarded as low performers and as difficult in other respects are picked out and given special treatment within the framework of the class.

Remedial instruction is a similar feature of school activities insofar as it often implies differentiation according to achievement level and therefore also social diffentiation. Remedial instruction is intended as a compensatory resource for pupils encoun-

tering difficulties in the course of ordinary instruction. A comparison of the standardized achievement test results of pupils in our generation who received remedial instruction (in Swedish and mathematics) in grade 3 shows that pupils in classes with low social status receive less remedial instruction in relation to their achievement level than pupils in classes with high social status. Thus in classes dominated by higher social classes, 48 per cent of the low performers receive remedial instruction (in Swedish), while only 25 per cent of the same category in the classes dominated by social class III receive this assistance. Although total resources are somewhat greater in the latter type of school class, they still fall short of the far greater needs involved.

Thus the system governing the distribution of remedial teaching resources means that, relatively speaking, teachers in classes dominated by social class III children have less chance of obtaining assistance for low performers. In practice, remedial teaching is one of the most important instruments that schools have for solving teaching problems. Today the distribution of remedial teaching resources depends to a great extent on the number of "problem pupils" a school professes to have. But the lines of demarcation between problems and normalcy vary from one school to another. A pupil regarded in one school as a problem pupil requiring extra help may be considered normal in another school.

Teachers and pupils in various school environments

As regards teacher recruitment, it transpires that classes where pupils from higher social classes predominate usually have older and more experienced teachers. Teachers in high status environments, moreover, stay longer in the same school, so that pupils are less frequently obliged to change teachers. Classes with large numbers of social class III pupils had the highest turnover in teachers during the junior level grades. The teacher turnover rate is con-

nected with the pupil turnover rate; classes with high pupil turnover rates also tend to change teachers more often.

There are also certain observable differences in the views taken by teachers of their professional role and of their pupils. Most of the teachers interviewed feel that children from the intermediate strata of society are easier to work with than others. A class composed entirely of children from the intermediate strata is considered easier to handle than a class of mixed social composition. Few teachers prefer working exclusively with upper class children, and classes composed entirely of children from lower social strata are considered the most difficult of all. It is the teachers taking the socially most homogeneous classes who are most in favour of socially mixed classes, while tachers taking the more heterogeneous classes prefer classes composed entirely of children from the intermediate strata of society.

On the subject of parental contacts, teachers reported positive contacts with parents from higher social classes more frequently than with parents from social class III; this applied regardless of the type of class taker by the individual teacher.

Children's school problems were recorded on the strength of data volunteered by the teachers during interviews and also in the light of data concerning remedial instruction. According to the teachers, children in the classes dominated by social class III have more problems at home and with their classmates than other children. It is mainly children from social class III who have problems, but children in the same classes belonging to higher social classes are also said to have their problems. Particulars concerning the problem pupils which teachers report from their classes should be assessed bearing in mind that every teacher feels himself to have a certain proportion of problem pupils, added to which problems existing in different surroundings are not readily comparable. The differences

between the various types of school class with regard to pupil problems are probably greater than is suggested by the data furnished by the teachers.

Immigrant pupils and pupils entering the class after grade 1 are said by their teachers to have more problems at home, at school and with their classmates than other pupils. Both these pupil categories also have lower performance levels than others. Immigrant pupils and migrating pupils are more numerous in classes where children from social class III predominate, and their characteristics vary depending on whether they are in low status or high status classes. About 90 per cent of the immigrant pupils in low status and lower mean status classes belong to social class III or are non-codifiable, while immigrant pupils in other classes tend more often (36 per cent) to belong to superior social classes. High status classes do not have many children from the major immigrant groups (e.g. Finns). About 84 per cent of the pupils who receive immigrant instruction are in school classes dominated by social class III pupils. It is mostly in classes of this kind that teachers report immigrant children as having problems and as falling short of the school achievements of Swedish children. Immigrant pupils in other types of classes are generally said to be free from problems, and their school performance is more on a level with that of their Swedish classmates.

Very similarly, migrant pupils are a palpable problem category in school classes dominated by social class III but a more normal group in school classes of other kinds. Migration intensity is often taken as an indicator of the social problems of an area. In our material we have studied immigration and emigration rates in the classes and grouped them in terms of high and low pupil turnover rates. Practically all the high status classes have low pupil turnover rates, while three-quarters of the low status classes have high pupil turnover rates.

Migration has a negative impact on school performance in classes dominated by social class III. Standardized achievement test results and marks there are substantially inferior in "changeable" as opposed to "stable" classes. This is not only because migrant pupils, taken as a group, have lower scores; other pupils in these classes are also low performers. This does not apply, however, to classes where higher social classes predominate. In these classes, school performance is actually better in "changeable" classes than in "stable" ones, which may suggest that migration holds different implications in different social environments. In high status enviroments, migration often means something positive, representing a "step up", while in low status environments it forms part of a different pattern; many pupils in the latter type of environment have migrated "downwards", their migration frequency is greater and their migrations often represent an attempt to escape from a difficult living situation.

Aspects of special treatment

The role of education in a socially stratified community and the attitudes adopted by schools towards pupils from various social classes are the total background against which special treatment has to be viewed, and social segregation is only part of the special treatment meted out to various groups in school and elsewhere.

The formal integration of different pupil groups which has been effected with the establishment of the comprehensive elementary school system has not decisively reduced the educational differences between social classes. The special educational treatment practised in the former system of parallel schools (elementary schools and high schools) involved a segregation of pupils from different social strata, but it also entailed differences of educational content as regards, for example, educational methods and resources, cognitive content and the formal qualifications conferred for future social

positions. The comprehensive elementary school, similarly, presents different educational environments and differences of educational content. It incorporates grouping principles whereby different social classes tend to a great extent to be put in different classrooms, different schools or different groupings within the same class, and it also incorporates differences of educational content; the allocation of resources, working methods, educational principles, etc. at different levels result in special treatment of pupils from different social strata, and this combined with the special social treatment received by pupils in the community at large results among other things in differences with regard to school achievements and futur prospects.

The principles according to which schools organize various pupil groups thus help to bring about a social segregation of pupils, especially in large municipalities with pronounced residential segregation. Owing to the proximity principle and the principle of the integrated class, school classes are often socially homogeneous, despite the provisions of the Elementary School Curriculum to the effect that they are to be of variegated social composition. Residential segregation has been accentuated in recent decades, and schools have become increasingly aware of problems in the school environment which are connected with the social structure of segregated housing areas. A segregated pupil structure can also result from the way in which a school divides its pupils into groups within the framework of the class (streamed groups, clinic groups etc).

Studies in social psychology can explain some of the special treatment occurring in the relationship between pupils and in relations between teachers, pupils and parents. Certain social environments, for example, are more conducive than other to a community of values between home and school. The special social treatment accorded via teachers must to a great extent be regarded as structurally conditioned: teachers occupy a definite role in a system with given rules

of competition and given power structures which determine the norms whereby pupils are assessed and treated.

The teaching of knowledge and skills is the sector of school activities in which the pupils' results are systematically measured, evaluated and rewarded and where the socially related differences between the pupils are most observable. Educational activities are among other things guided by ideas concerning the similarities and dissimilarities of the pupils' aptitudes. Underlying the educational principles there is often an approach whereby pupils with learning problems are taken to be a limited group whose problems are of a uniform nature and fairly evenly distributed between different social environments. Otherwise the variation existing in pupils' aptitudes is considered "natural", corresponding as it does to the school's task of judging pupils according to the extent of their success or failure in their school work. If teachers lack the educational means to take care of pupils who are socially disadvantaged at school, these pupils will be experienced as impediments and problems in the teaching context.

Differences in the workings of various school environments from the pupils' point of view can also be reinforced by special treatment as regards economic resources. Thus inequalities in the finances of individual municipalities lead to certain differences between their school systems, and the allocation of resources between schools and school management areas within a municipality can also produce important differences in working methods, the treatment of low performers and so on. Of course, the private economic circumstances of pupils and their parents also produce differences, above all as regards the pupils' total living circumstances but also with regard to such school activities as excursions, journeys and camps.

In the ultimate analysis, the special treatment meted out by schools in these various contexts is dependent on political decisions and political measures, not only in the sense that school activities are governed by policy-making bodies but also because political aims and values often have an unconscious or tacit impact on the treatment given to different groups of pupils.

Interview survey of school management

The interview survey of school management (i.e headmasters and directors of studies) in the municipalities of Borås, Malmö and Linköping formed part of the preparations made by officers at the various LEAs for the impending SIA reform. Our survey covers that portion of the SIA reform[1] which is connected with auxiliary resources, as they are termed.

The principial changes involved by auxiliary resources in the SIA model entail a formal reallocation of resources rather than an actual reinforcement. These changes have also resulted in decision-making powers concerning the deployment of resources being delegated to the various school management areas.

Thus the interview study of elementary school headmasters in the three municipalities mentioned above was intended to have a practical bearing on municipal planning in the school sector, at the same time as it was expected to yield additional general knowledge concerning differences between school environments.

Practically all the headmasters interviewed stated that differences existed between school management areas and that these differences influenced the volume and nature of problems in schools. There are great differences in the social situation of pupils in different school environments. Underlying everything we have the pupils' social circumstances. Schools reinforce the differences existing between pupils from the very outset. Schools devote more effort to

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1) SIA: the Royal Commission on the Internal work of schools

the maintenance of order than to working with the large group of children who get on badly in school. It is the pupils who cause problems and disruptions in schools who are given resources.

The headmasters themselves confirm the prevalence of this view of the problem in their descriptions of "the most inportant problems" in their respective schools. Worries about facilities, teaching staff and the inadequacy of resources are the main problems, followed by disturbances caused by pupils (truancy, gangs, unrest, vandalism...). The differing returns obtained by pupils from their schooling - in present and future terms - are seldom taken as a starting point for the definition or problems.

The headmasters differ in their standpoints concerning the image of elementary school outlined above and concerning what can be done to change it. This is understandable, because the standpoint to be adopted is fundamentally political, involving a choice between different goals and interests in the community. A large group of headmasters feel that resources must be given to the pupils who have the greatest difficulty in coping with their schooling, and that the allocation of resources must be founded on an assessment of the total pupil populations of different school management areas and of conditions in the community at large. Opinions vary, however, concerning the extent to which these factors should be allowed to influence resources. A far smaller group of headmasters argue that all pupils must receive equal shares of the available resourses and that it is not the business of schools at all to compensate certain pupils for the injustices of society. Although the majority are basically in favour of socially problematical school environments being given more resources, there are objections to the allocation prevailing in the respondents' respective municipalities and already conferring extra resources on certain "problem areas". The common argument is that awkward school management areas must be given plenty of resources, but not to such an extent as to deprive others.

Investigations carried out in the course of our project have clearly shown that the resources for remedial teaching have hitherto been distributed in a manner prejudicial to schools with a heavy load of social problems. This allocation of resources has only been viewed in relation to the pupils' school performance as reflectet by the results of standardized achievement test. If other factors in the school situation of pupils in different school environments, such as the support they receive at home, their security, their expressive ability, their self-awareness, their future prospects - and other things not measured in school tests - are also taken into consideration, it becomes apparent that the differences between the help needed in schools and the resources available for providing help are even greater. It is only consistent with the increased assumption of responsibility by schools for the total situation of their pupils - as envisaged by the SIA reform - that greater attention should be paid to these differences and that auxiliary resources should be distributed in such a way as to be more closely adapted to the substantial needs existing in different social environments. But closer adaptation to the pupils' needs in more than a question of resource allocation; as many headmasters pointed out in the interviews, it is also a question of the way in which resources are used. Remedial teaching and other working procedures in school can lead to internal segregation in classes and to other kinds of special treatment prejudicial to pupils who are initially disadvantaged.

Changes in favour of increased local influence and co-operation are to a great extent simply a formal confirmation of a de facto situation, at least - according to the headmasters - in many schools. Different staff groups, and also bodies outside the schools themselves, are already helping to shape the course of school work. As regards trade union influence, the Co-determination Act has brought changes which the majority of headmasters view in a negative light. Many of them observe that joint negotiations of the kind provided for in the Act are a time-consuming and circuitous substitute for the direct consultations which used to take place between the rele-

vant groups in schools. Some headmasters actually believe that the Co-determination Act will impede the implementation of the SIA reform.

Asked at the end of their interviews what effect they believed the SIA reform would have, many of the headmasters declared themselves pessimistic. Some of them did not believe that the SIA reform would bring any changes at all, while others were sceptical or believed that there would only be slight changes.

"Given more resources", "If everybody really pitches in", "If the reforms had been introduced more gradually" - these were the terms on which the SIA reform could have a real impact, according to the few headmasters who were at all optimistic about it. Only a small minority of the interviewees were less guarded concerning the positive potential of the SIA reform, and their emphasis was not on the organizational changes but on the aims which can be discerned behind the reform, especially the aim of making school meaningful to pupils who at present are getting little or nothing out of their schooling. The introduction of teamwork is regarded as a step forward, and it is hoped that the SIA school will induce teachers to adopt a better total view of their pupils.

Concluding remarks

At the beginning of the project (1972), the questions raised in our researches met with scepticism on the part of most of the people we came into contact with in the school community and elsewhere. It was not an accepted description of the school system to say that elementary schools operated in terms of different pupil categories and that their working methods operated differently in relation to different categories, even though the SIA Commission, whose task was to revise work procedures to make better provision for the needs of underprivileged pupil groups, had already been appointed in 1970. As the project has progressed, these questions have met with growing under-

standing. The accumulation of problems in certain segregated school environments, coupled with the persistent social bias in recruitment for higher education, has forced schools to pay attention to the consequences of segregation and special treatment at elementary school level. One of the guidelines of the SIA report, whereby schools should use auxiliary resources among other things as a means of helping children who are educuationally disadvantaged, may present oppurtunities of improving the situation of these pupils. In deploying these resources, however, it is important to take into consideration the demonstrable consequences of segregation and special treatment in segregated school environments. Those consequences are not only a manifestation of the general workings of the present school system. They should also be viewed as a symptom of the general workings of the present school system vis à vis different social groups among its pupils. We find it gratifying, therefore, that schools appear to be paying more and more attention to problems connected with the socially conditioned differences beween pupils, and we feel that the efforts which are being made to alleviate these problems merit observation.